

The Power of Tactical Wins in Major Account Selling

By Art Wilson

Transferring your vision of a major sales success to others in your organization and your customer's organization is essential to success. In the long run, if you do not create a vision of the sale, you will at best continue short-term tactical selling and, at worst, be vulnerable to competitors who have transferred their vision to key individuals in your major account.

But don't totally discount tactical selling. Tactical wins play a valuable role in major account selling. So even if you have not completely transferred your success vision to a champion within your major account, you can advance it by tallying tactical wins. How?



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- It is 80 percent easier to get the second sale. Get the first small one as early as possible.
- You can choose to play to your strengths. Customers tend to select and pay a premium to sellers with whom they have had previous success.
- You can choose opportunities that are important to the customer although they may be small to you. Customers remember high-impact things that you do for them, particularly when it is evident that the short-term revenue to you is small.
- If the smaller project is competitive, it allows you to shine in comparison with competitors. Since you have a long-term view, you can “overkill” the proposal quality and sales effort, while competitors will often use short-term, high-pressure techniques.
- At the conclusion of a small project, you want your customer to say, “I don't really understand why they invested so much in such a small piece of business. If they are willing to do the job that well on this, imagine what they will do on a major project.”
- You will learn more about the customer that will help in future sales.
- Typically you will not get a firm, long-range commitment to a major project; it will happen in steps. Smaller commitments, within a broad framework, lead to the overall vision for you and your customer.
- Small sales made in a professional manner and exceeding customer expectations build teamwork between you and your customer. The customer begins to view you and your associates as a valuable part of their organization.
- Small projects, well executed, give you the opportunity to celebrate success with your customer and your team.
- When the time comes for significant decisions, a history of small, successful projects will often keep your competitors out. A competitor with many prospects may hesitate to invest in an extended sales effort and resort to bidding on price alone.
- Doing smaller projects helps you better anticipate when to ask for major commitments. Correctly preparing for opportunity allows major sales to happen naturally, at the most appropriate time for the customer.
- With an established selling partner, customers can make big decisions with little fanfare. No bids, no evaluations—just the order.

The number one characteristic that differentiates the top one percent of major account salespeople from others is their ability to create a vision of future success for their key clients and themselves. But while visualizing the major steps and experience of your major sales success, sell select tactical projects along the way. By focusing on those tactical sales that give high value to your customer, executing well, and staying personally involved, you'll be well on your way to realizing your vision for success.

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